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"THE OLD MASTERS."

THE praise and enthusiasm lavished on the "Old Masters," by the throngs of travelers crossing and recrossing the ocean during the past summer, would have made the fortune of a score of living artists had it been diverted in that direction.

No doubt many found points worthy of study in these old works, but many, too, praised because others praised and commended because it was the fashion to commend.

There may be merits to admire in the early "Masters," but there were serious restrictions in the ages when they lived and painted, that operated against their talents and circumscribed their scope and opportunities. Ideas were contracted, and superstition and ignorance dictated the subjects and character of their works. Had everything been equal, it is possible that their genius might have attained perfection and left no room for criticism. In those days painting, sculpture and literature treated of subjects sacred in themselves, or calculated to lead the mind to the contemplation of holy things. Every phase of life was made subservient to these principles, and from the rug upon the floor to that which hung at the door, the tapestries that paneled the walls and the frescos upon the ceiling, the skill of the artist was directed toward this one end.

It would have been a satisfaction to have noted Raphael's talent in an Alpine view, or Murillo's conception of the Falls of the Schaffhausen; had they cut themselves adrift from the intolerance of their time they might have left us masterpieces that would be a joy to our senses, greater than the present collection of forgotten saints, pin-cushioned with arrows or contemplating skulls or sirens.

Horrible evidences of martyrdom are given in all the realistic sense of Zola, and the wounds and bruises and death from jagged rocks and cruel spears, leave nothing to the imagination. Delicate women and helpless children are seen struggling with giants, and suffering well counterfeited pains, and not more savage animals are feeding on the tenderest human morsels. No man can indulge in a repetition of scenes such

as these, without more or less the humanity he should cultivate rather than discourage, and as he becomes familiar with the portrayal, so he loses sympathy, the purest sentiment of human kind, for the actual suffering of man or brute.

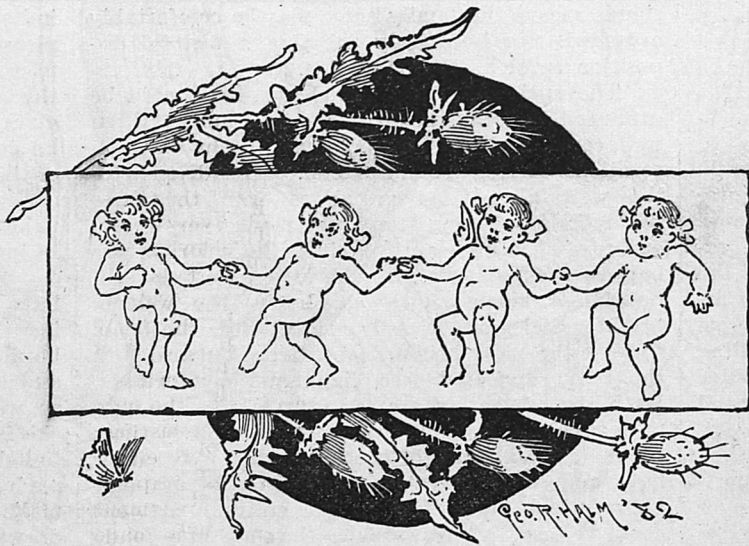
Yet these are works of art—for ourselves we prefer a "symphony in white."

But it is the fashion, and so long as it is, the more refined gems at Luxembourg and Versailles, will be ignored beside the horror of certain sections of the Louvre.

HOME PASTIMES.

PAINTING FOR PARLOR AMUSEMENT.

THE average amateur would find it much more satisfactory, and the work more likely to be successful, if he would confine his painting to flat wares, such as plaques and the like; and to still further increase the chances for success, let him be content with one color. The possibilities of



monochrome are greater than it is usually credited with, for the shading may be made very artistic and produce pleasing effects. Tiles would serve in this way admirably and some neat work may be done upon them; prints from old works may be copied upon them, and in this way they may be diversified to suit the taste of the painter, and the outline figures, popularly known as the Kate Greenway, may be made in monochrome.

This is a mode of passing time in decorative efforts that is, just now, becoming quite popular.

It might be convenient at some time to attach a metal plate or tablet to a surface of porcelain or marble, for the purpose only of

sign be drawn upon a lay under the glass Painting black or by no ficult

piece of paper, and paint to it. upon marble, white, is means dif- affording a very pleas- ant

pastime. Black marble should be treated with rich colors; heavy colors of a solid, substantial, high tone best found in oil. White marble, to the contrary, may be made very effective against the pure white background.

Mirror painting is almost too well known to require much notice, though we may be pardoned recalling a very neat device, employed to conceal a flaw in the glass of a mirror, which we saw noticed in the *Times*. It was a calla lily painted across the face of the glass, and springing from the frame at one side.

A piece of glass having a varnish or coating of beeswax, in which the design is traced with a sharp point, may be etched by pouring over these scratches hydrofluoric acid, which cuts or eats into the glass. The varnish may be washed off with turpentine.

There are so many novelties and beautiful pieces of bric-a-brac shown in the fancy stores, that we are at times puzzled which to select, and we find new shapes appearing daily. Porcelain dragons are among the recent additions, and their rich colors look well and show far from the etagère or bracket. Jade, Cameo, Malachite and Limoges enamels are quite common in ornamental ways. Boubonieres are adorned with lilies and roses in relief and richly colored, whilst plaques of metal for painting and little three-fold screens, with porcelain panels, are the very latest for hand painting the menu at fashionable dinners.

We understand the custom is to be revived of painting love-saucers, that is, saucers, plates or jugs bearing the likeness of the lady (or gentleman, let us hope), in whom one may be, at the moment, most interested. This was a popular mode of expressing preferences in the "good old times," and may meet with favor now.

The craze for antique remembrances of the age of Marie Antoinette creates a market, we are quietly warned, for many otherwise useless articles that have kicked about warerooms until the happy idea occurred of coating them with fluorhydric acid, which gives them a Fifteenth Century bloom, thus imitating the custom of "peppering" a modern sideboard with bird shot, to make it a medieval worm-eaten relic, after which they are sold to rapturous maidens with rich papas.



Sketches on this page contributed by the Charcoal Club of New York.